



Prince George's County Public Schools

14201 School Lane • Upper Marlboro, Maryland 20772 • www.pgcps.org

William R. Hite, Ed.D.
Interim Superintendent of Schools

March 5, 2009

Mr. Lewis Robinson, Executive Director
Prince George's County Educators' Association
8008 Marlboro Pike
Forestville, Maryland 20747

Dear Mr. Robinson:

I am writing to express to you my appreciation for the exemplary contributions that teachers have made toward the implementation of the Institute for Learning (IFL), School Max and Collaborative Planning. When we met a month ago, I heard and read your questions and comments regarding the workload of teachers, particularly around these issues. In order to continue the work, I want to take this opportunity to clarify some "concerns" that have been voiced to me regarding the implementation process.

As you are aware, the IFL is our primary partner for strands of our work: cultivating instructional leadership in all our administrators and using the IFL Principles of Learning (POLs) to guide instructional improvement at all school sites. Our goal can be accomplished through LearningWalks, Study Groups and other structured protocols and practices intended to nurture professional learning communities among school-based staff and improve the instructional delivery of curricular knowledge and skills to our students. In order to execute these tasks, finding "time" for instructional conversations continues to be problematic, but not insolvable.

I want to make it clear that our practices should not infringe on individual teacher planning and time and create additional meetings beyond those identified in the Negotiated Agreement. To demonstrate my commitment, I have requested that each administrative team remove at least one meeting per month from their schedule. In addition, as we all become "comfortable" with the LearningWalks protocols this school year, classroom teacher participation should be on a voluntary basis.

The second initiative, SchoolMax, the Student Information System, assists schools with the improvement of student outcomes by making positive changes in four areas: effectiveness, equity, parent involvement and cost savings. This is accomplished by providing schools with the ability to access online and real-time student data such as attendance, discipline, academic progress (grade books, progress reports, and report cards) and assessment information. I recognize that the implementation has not been as smooth as we would like, but your input regarding issues surrounding the implementation and suggested solutions for the problems have been invaluable. It is our goal to ensure that this process affords school personnel the opportunity to enhance their capacity to perform their job responsibilities.

Board of Education of Prince George's County

Mr. Lewis Robinson
March 5, 2009
Page Two

In response to the concerns shared with me, I will be working the PGCEA President Donald Briscoe, through the Labor Management Committee, to provide additional recommendations for refinement and efficiency. To bring about relief, I am directing staff to comply with the following:

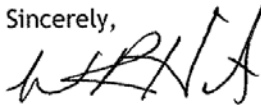
- The administration is attempting to provide time for teachers to correct their grade books. Once all grade books have been corrected, we will remove the requirement for progress reports of students in those schools where student records are available online to parents. In those buildings or grade levels where they are not, progress reports must be issued for those students in danger of failing during the grading period only.
- Teachers will only be required to keep one record of grades and attendance for this year. Downloaded or printed copies from SchoolMax reports shall be permitted for recordkeeping.
- PGCPS will hold teachers harmless in this our implementation year as we seek to eliminate glitches in our Student Information System; train our staff to effectively use the system; and work with the union to develop a teacher-friendly productive system. Our expectation is that each and every teacher must be able to demonstrate that they are addressing the grading and attendance policies of the district in a professional manner.

With respect to Collaborative Planning, we know that teachers who communicate and plan together share the benefits of learning from each other and feel less overwhelmed and burned out. Teacher planning time, as established by the Negotiated Agreement, will include teacher input. However, time beyond that prescribed by the Negotiated Agreement may be scheduled for those educators who want to participate and share in a collaborative setting.

In closing, your efforts at each individual schoolhouse continue to enable the Prince George's County public school system to demonstrate continuous improvements in teaching and learning. I am proud of what has been accomplished and know that our continued partnership with the various initiatives will create the momentum for further improvements. I will continue to work with the leadership of PGCEA to ensure that we can deliver the best possible education to all students.

Thank you for your continued support. I look forward to continuing dialogue as we work together as a team to resolve issues.

Sincerely,



William R. Hite
Interim Superintendent of Schools

WRH:bpm

c: Members, Board of Education
Members, Executive Cabinet